

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 137534

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL, MARR, NATO

SUBJECT: US UTILIZATION OF NATO III SATELLITES

REF: STATE 127000

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO REQUEST THAT YOU INFORM NATO OF THE CURRENT US DSCS SATELLITE STATUS WITH A VIEW TOWARD INITIATING DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLE NATO ACTIONS WHICH WOULD MATERIALLY ASSIST THE US IN IMPROVING ITS SATELLITE POSTURE. PLEASE ADVISE NICSMA AND SHAPE OF THE FOLLOWING.

2. ON MAY 20, 1975, TWO DSCS II SATELLITES WERE DUAL LAUNCHED BUT FAILED TO ACHIEVE ORBIT BECAUSE OF A TRANS
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STAGE BOOSTER FAILURE. A SUCCESSFUL ORBIT PLACEMENT WOULD

HAVE ENABLED THE US TO ACHIEVE THE NEEDED DSCS II COVERAGE. FAILURE TO ACHIEVE ORBIT HAS RESULTED IN DSCS CONTINUED RELIANCE IN THE NEAR TERM ON ONE EACH DSCS II ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC SATELLITES AND THE NATO IIB SATELLITE IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC. THE FIRST TWO OF SIX ADDITIONAL DSCS II SATELLITES ARE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR LAUNCH IN MID 1977 BUT THIS DATE CAN POSSIBLY BE MOVED UP TO JANUARY 1977.

3. AN ANALYSIS OF OUR CURRENT CAPABILITY VERSUS OUR NEAR TERM NEEDS INDICATES THE FOLLOWING:

A. THERE IS THE HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THE NATO IIB SATELLITE WILL FAIL IN THE NEAR TERM. AT THIS POINT, THE US WILL HAVE AN URGENT REQUIREMENT FOR AN EASTPAC SATELLITE. A NATO III TYPE SATELLITE COULD SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT REASONABLY WELL WITHOUT ANY MODIFICATION. ASSUMING SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH AND OPERATION OF THE NATO IIIA SATELLITE, IT APPEARS THE NATO IIB SATELLITE COULD BE EXPEDITED AND MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE BY MID 1976. THE US, THEREFORE, WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE WITH NATO THE POSSIBILITY OF NATO LAUNCHING THE NATO IIB SATELLITE WHEN IT IS READY RATHER THAN PLACING IT IN STORAGE.

B. ONE OR BOTH OF THE CURRENT DSCS II SATELLITES COULD ALSO FAIL PREMATURELY. A NATO III TYPE SATELLITE HAS THE CAPABILITY FOR SATISFYING MANY OF THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS BEING HANDLED BY THE DSCS II ATLANTIC SATELLITE. THEREFORE, THE US WOULD ALSO LIKE TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF, AND ADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH, EXPEDITING COMPLETION OF THE NATO IIIC (QUALIFICATION MODEL) SO THAT IT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT EITHER A NATO OR US SATELLITE CONTINGENCY.

4. WITH THE VIEW TOWARD CONTRACTING IN FY-76, THE US IS INVESTIGATING THE PROCUREMENT OF A MINIMUM OF TWO ADDITIONAL NATO III TYPE SATELLITES WHICH WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR EITHER NATO OR US USE. THE US WILL FUND THE PROCUREMENT, AS NECESSARY, EITHER TO REPLACE SATELLITES BORROWED FROM NATO OR TO OBTAIN THE SATELLITES FOR ITS OWN USE.

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5. THE US WOULD LIKE TO CONDUCT EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH APPROPRIATE NICSMA AND SHAPE PERSONNEL TO DETERMINE IF NATO III SATELLITES CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE US ALONG THE LINES OF THE FOREGOING. DISCUSSIONS SHOULD INCLUDE SUCH MATTERS AS:

A. COST OR COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS, AS REQUIRED.

B. SCHEDULING AND/OR RESCHEDULING, AS REQUIRED.

C. QUID PRO QUO ARRANGEMENTS, IF ANY.

D. NATO COUNTER-PROPOSALS, IF ANY.

6. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DESIRED TALKS TAKE PLACE IN BRUSSELS IN JULY. SUCH DATE WILL ALLOW ADDITIONAL PREPARATION TIME REQUIRED BY THE US AND FOLLOW-ON TIME REQUIRED TO PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT AT THE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED SEPTEMBER SCCPG MEETING. PLEASE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THESE TALKS AND ADVISE OF DATE SO THAT WASHINGTON PERSONNEL CAN PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

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